



May 22, 2012

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Hon. Sally Clark, Tim Burgess and Tom Rasmussen
Seattle City Council
Seattle, WA.

Dear Councilmembers Clark, Burgess and Rasmussen:

The Manufacturing Industrial Council and our affiliate group, the Duwamish Transportation Management Association, will provide input during legislative review of the proposed SODO arena draft MOU. We are interested in any input opportunities that might arise in the committees that you chair. We are also available to provide briefings or host meetings or tours in the community.

Our input is based, in part, on the MIC serving for the past decade as the community steward organization to support implementation of the Greater Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center Plan. The MIC acquired that role in 2001 through our merger with the Duwamish Planning Committee. As the community steward, we have undertaken many activities in partnership with the city and other public agencies to support many different aspects of plan implementation including business retention, education and workforce development, land use, environmental regulations and transportation.

We share the following concerns.

1. Freight

Night events have daytime impacts in SODO. This is documented in the *Holgate Street Railroad Crossing Study* commissioned and approved by SDOT in 2010. The study included analysis of daytime traffic impacts of night games at Safeco Field. On those days, traffic began to grow beyond normal levels about noon with a significant increase from 2-4 p.m. Truck dispatchers and drivers anticipate these periods, moving their operations to earlier in the day and adding to congestion. Early arrivers use other SODO roads in addition to Holgate. This transportation issue needs to be taken into account along with the expected traffic impacts of overlapping or day-time arena events.

2. Road Network

The stadium overlay was intended to support and mitigate the two existing stadiums. Mitigation included extensive regional plans for major road projects to enable trucks to travel between and around the stadiums to reach the marine cargo terminals and rail facilities west of 1st Avenue South, and the major highways, roads and railroad lines east of 1st Avenue. The road network was not completed as planned. This reduced the planned east-west through capacity. Other highway improvements near SODO will not address the bottlenecks created by this failure. East-west road access will be very expensive to provide or expand. Who will pay for it?

3. Transit

SODO is home to several highly visible transit maintenance bases. A relatively large volume of transit service also moves through SODO. But transit service in SODO is actually quite poor for people attempting to travel to or from locations in the SODO community. Transit availability is further limited in many areas by poor and even hazardous pedestrian conditions. These same factors will constrain transit services for patrons of a third arena. Fixing these problems is not easy or cheap. More information about these issues is available online at www.duwamishtma.org, under “*Street Smart: Alternatives to Drive-Alone Commuting in the Duwamish.*”

4. Deep Bore Tunnel

Some of the present congestion in SODO is caused by construction activity to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct with a deep bore tunnel. The supplemental EIS for the tunnel shows that completion of the project will bring more vehicular congestion to the stadium area as more motorists use 1st and 4th Avenues South to travel into and out of downtown Seattle.

This congestion will not only compromise truck operations - it will impact bus operations.

To give an example, Metro terminated bus service one year ago on 1st Avenue South in the stadium area because it became impractical to operate buses amid so much traffic congestion. This change leaves 4th Avenue as the nearest route for stadium-related bus service and requires bus riders to find ways through and around major railroad yards to reach the stadiums. This demonstrates the complicated nature of the SODO transportation landscape.

5. Industry Impact

The Port of Seattle (POS) conducts an ongoing survey based largely on company interviews to document the impacts of job sectors using POS facilities. The survey estimates that marine cargo operations at Port facilities generate about \$3 billion in revenue per year based on company interviews and assorted multipliers. That total includes about \$1 billion per year in local taxes, wages and business revenue. More than 12,400 people work at Port marine cargo facilities. Adding indirect jobs may bring the combined total of direct and related jobs to 33,000. Even the direct job count of 12,400 shows the significance of this economic activity and the reasons why it needs to be both respected and supported.

The Port economic impact study is available online. The city has conducted other studies through the years also documenting maritime economic impacts. In our experience, the city studies are fairly consistent with the Port’s findings.

Port container traffic grew by 40% over the past 10 years.

6. Land Use

The arena developer is candid about his goal to gentrify SODO as an extension of downtown Seattle. We believe him and disagree with him. A May 1, 2012 report to the Seattle City Council Committee on Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations documented that SODO vacancy rates are lower than other industrial areas in King County and that the community is economically healthy, with job growth on the rebound from the recession. As with the port and railroad properties that surround the stadium area, most of SODO is in active industrial use.

Hon. Sally Clark, Tim Burgess and Tom Rasmussen
May 22, 2012
Page 3

A significant change in land use would impact SODO traffic conditions, increase congestion and add to the challenges of maintaining east-west truck access in the stadium area. Such a change would also require enormous investments in infrastructure for everything from sidewalks to drainage to road pavement and environmental cleanup. Who would pay for it?

Conclusion

The existing stadiums were sited following extensive public review processes that considered alternative stadium sites and detailed comparisons of transportation impacts. The present proposal should be reviewed through a similar process.

Please call if we can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Gering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dave Gering Executive Director
Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle
206-762-2470